Dear Howard, 3/22/77

This is in part a report of good news, in part an inquiry to which it is probable your response should be negative.

I heard from Zebra this afternoon. They are making me an offer. It includes pulling the stops on promotions, etc.

They have, wisely, taken me literally when I told them I'd like an editor to go over what I've written before it is retyped. I've told them of the speed with which I work and the multitude of interruptions and what has become a real confabulation problem. They are thinking in terms of editing cost that can run into a rewrite job. We'll be talking about that.

To come as close as possible to eliminating structural problems I want to get together with them and not only agree on the structure but to think about it in the terms normal to publishers. Here their experience can make a big difference in what the book can do. This may happen next week. Instead of asking them to make a special trip to DC I've asked them when they can. Their answer was that if they do not have one we can meet at the airport. True, in the bar.

One of the discouragements is that they have a loser in a Bud book. It has to be a bad book and the bad books have never sold. Except the frauds. They are taking half-page ads and 30 TV spots in DC alone. I certainly want everything set before they have this experience. This experience also will enable me to pull them up with a solid work, although there will be a bad effect on their next book.

Another is that I can expect even less help from Jil. I can't even ask her to make a copy for me now. This also increases the worry of which you know, the continuing deterioration. She could probably retype safely and probably very well and very dependably. This would also be true of the index. But no more.

It and a winter of inactivity have wearied me much. When the adrenalin flows it is as it was and I believe there will be no adrenalin problem. There will be with getting up to fetch records from the perhaps 30,000 pages I have, added to about 500 a week - and these have to be read.

So I have a deal and there is no emotion. Not even after I made the same deal I gave to an agent who made a big mess of it and failed.

They will offer me a 50% split on profits. They are preparing to send McDonald a check in six figures. (I knew about this independently.) They have also refused to do any of the other books he has suggested, not usual when they made a pot on his fraud. Tomorrow evening they'll call and we ll discuss an advance. Which means I'll have some front money. Which means I can pay for help, something I can't get through the local college or anyone I know around here.

The help should be in two forms, a sort of gofor so I won't have to jump up and down all the time and interrupt concentration and someone who can go over the draft before it is retyped. The retyping can't begin until after 4/15. After next week's depositions I'll start writing. I've done a bit I have to read, decide on and flesh out (where the gofor could be invaluable).

So I'm asking if aside from the break you need and the work you have to do in preparing for the bars you might have a couple of weeks. On preparing for the bars it is Jim's opinion that the bar review course generally is worthwhile, that law school does not prepare graduates for the bars. He says the review course usualy takes 6-8 weeks. I begin this way because your own interest must be foremost.

The organization I have in mind is simple. I think. Except for 3-4 chapters at the beginning and a couple at the end it will all be the secret stuff I've obtained juxtaposed

with the official allegations. The totality o f opposites is incredible. And, of course, the deliberateness becaomes obvious. It is so total I doubt the lawbooks have a case anything like it. In this I believe it is without precedent. With the WC remember they had witnesses they could get to say what they wanted. Almost none here and where there is the perjury is certain and safe to allege.

Then I'll go into what really happened, solving the crime to the degree reasonably possible. I think this will mean all but names.

While writing this what I think is a simplification is possible. This is where discussion with a pro publisher can help. Of course this limns the problem of being alone.

There is also the usual problem of immersion in superabundance. This is a rickes without equal and of extraordinary volume. I have close to 10,000 FBI pages and this is something over a third. It will be coming in while I write, about 500 pages a week. In May the weekly volume will be doubled. And this is without an search of the field office files, where a number of field offices have more and more important information than is in the HQ files I'm getting. Too much and a disposition to want to include too much because it is all so important are real problems for me.

It is time for the evening TV news. Sprague and others questioned Ray today. I should see what if anything is aired.

I was tired last night when we spoke. It was a day of more than 19 hours without the emotional problems. So I may not recall clearly. However, I think you have too tight a schedule to consider this and I think you should look out for your own immediate interests first. Meanwhile, although I've had no success, I'll continue looking for someone in the area. If the committee is not continued I can see a possibility there. But today the leadership came out for continuing the committee. This probably means it will be continued.

Jim says he was within second of not getting the motion for a rehearing in the transcripts case filed in time. He assembled the papers in the clerk's office!

Best,